



What is a Gross Polluter?

MARCH 1998

Some vehicles that fail their smog inspections emit such high levels of pollution that a new category, called Gross Polluter, was created by law to identify and encourage the repair of the worst polluting vehicles on California's roadways.

Vehicles produce half of the smog in the state. And though Gross Polluters represent only 10 to 15 percent of all California vehicles, they are responsible for over 50 percent of vehicle smog.

Gross Polluters pollute much more than a typical failing vehicle. The emissions level at which a vehicle fails as a Gross Polluter varies according to the vehicle type and year.

Additionally, older vehicles are not held to the same standards as newer vehicles. Standards are less stringent as vehicles get older because of the wear and tear they receive and the fact that no vehicle is held to a greater standard than the one it was held to when the vehicle was originally manufactured.

By law, a Gross Polluter must be certified at a separate facility—a Test-Only Station—from the one that repaired the vehicle.

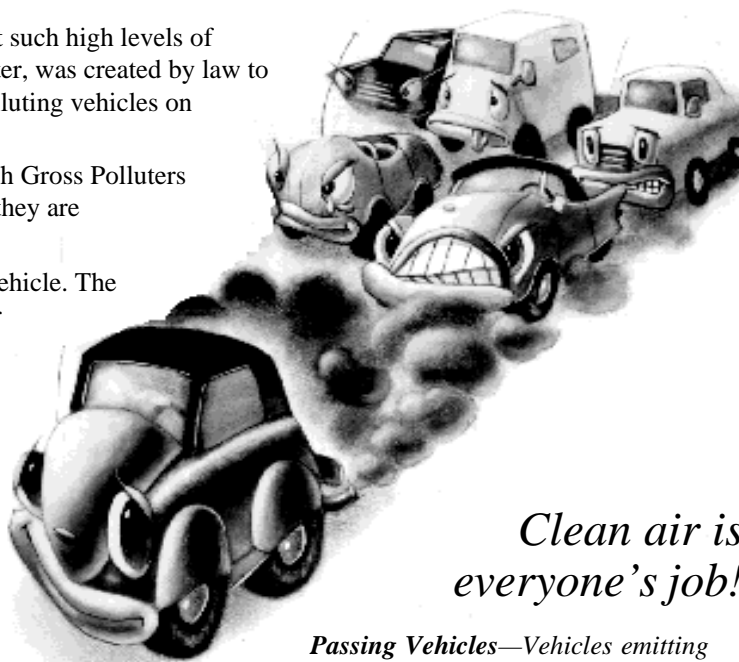
However, a Gross Polluter Certification Pilot has been created to test the feasibility of having Gross Polluters repaired and certified at the same location. There are over 100 of these pilot stations throughout California for the convenience of motorists. This program must also meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency approval.

For motorists who cannot afford to make repairs, there are some options under the Smog Check program that offer some temporary financial relief—a Repair Cost Waiver, an Economic Hardship Extension, and a Repair Assistance Program (a pilot program begins in 1998).

If you are considering buying or selling a used car, remember it must first pass a Smog Check. Be careful not to let any money change hands until the seller has provided you with the Vehicle Inspection Report that will tell you if the vehicle has passed its Smog Check inspection. You should also check to see if your vehicle's warranty will cover the repairs.

Smog is a serious health problem in California. According to the California Air Resources Board and the South Coast Air Quality Management District, smog causes decreased breathing ability, inflammation in lung tissue, damage to respiratory cells, an increased risk of cancer, increased asthma attacks, increased chest pains for those with heart disease due to a lack of oxygen in the bloodstream, increased hospital and emergency room admissions, and increased infections among children. Even healthy people exposed to smog can experience headaches, fatigue, slow reflexes, and dizziness.

Gross Polluters create more smog than all other vehicles. So keep your vehicles well-maintained. It will save you money on gas mileage and major engine failures, extend the life of your vehicle, help you pass your Smog Check, and allow all Californians to breathe a little easier.



Clean air is everyone's job!

Passing Vehicles—Vehicles emitting allowable emissions levels in accordance with their emissions standards.

Failing Vehicles—A Failing Vehicle emits more than the allowable emissions standards and/or has missing or modified parts. These vehicles usually have a high level of deterioration and/or a significant emissions system defect.

Gross Polluters—Gross Polluters are the worst polluting vehicles on the road and pollute much more than a typical failing vehicle. Gross Polluter standards vary according to the age and type of vehicle. For example, a 1987-92 vehicle that is a Gross Polluter pollutes an average of 18 times more than the average Passing Vehicle for that category. And a 1968-70 vehicle that is a Gross Polluter pollutes an average of 4 times more than the average Passing Vehicle for that category. These vehicles also usually have a high level of deterioration and major emissions system defects or have a tampered emissions system.